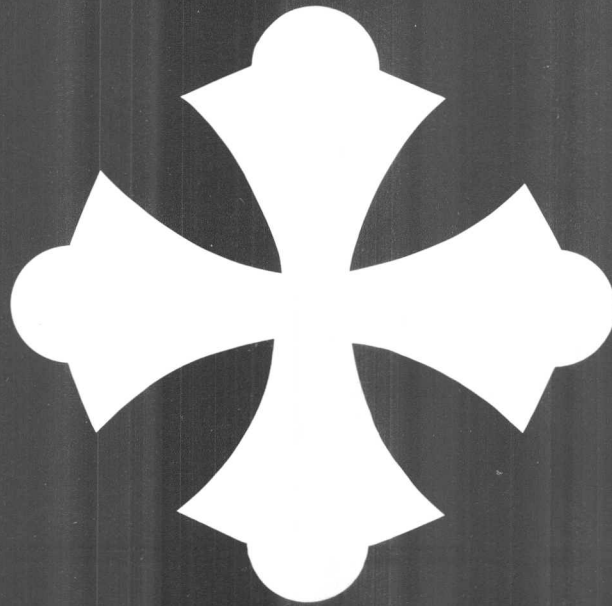


# COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 4, Number 4 . . . . . Winter 1983

- *Christian Baptism in the Old Testament*
- *St. Shenute the Archimandrite: On the Patriarchs*
- *Coptic Orthodoxy Today*



*Society of Coptic Church Studies*

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## ***ABOUT THIS ISSUE***

The Coptic Orthodox Church is approaching its third Christmas with its father and spiritual leader. *His Holiness Pope Shenouda III*, still in exile under armed guards in the desert monastery of St. Bishoi. Coptic Church Review introduces this issue with an article by His Holiness translated from his book *Meditations on the Nativity* (Cairo, 1969).

Epiphany or the Day of the lights is the feast of the Baptism of Christ. In the Coptic Church it has been an occasion for baptizing the new members. For the celebration of the feast, a liturgy for the consecration of water is still performed before the Divine Liturgy. *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, in the same Eastern Tradition, takes the occasion of Epiphany to teach about Baptism. ***Christian Baptism in the Old Testament Types and Prophecies*** is adapted from his sermon on the Day of Lights, as translated in the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers

The Homily by *St. Shenute (Shenouda) the Archimandrite* ***On the Patriarchs*** is translated from the Sahidic Coptic by the Rev. *Father Dimitri Cozby*. Father Cozby is a priest of the Orthodox Church in America and pastor of St. Gregory Orthodox Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is also a Ph.D. candidate at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

*Dr. Raef Marcus* continues his ***History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church under the Sword of Islam***. This third article in the series deals with Islamic persecution of the Coptic Church during the eighth century, which was the second century after the Arab invasion of Egypt.

In ***Coptic Orthodoxy Today***, *L. MacCoull*, Director of the Cairo Center of the International Association for Coptic Studies, discusses three problems that face the Copts today, both in Egypt and abroad. This challenging article awaits serious study from members and friends of the Coptic Church.

### ***The Coptic Language and Pope Shenouda III***

It is significant that *L. MacCoull* calls for the return to the use of classical Sahidic Coptic in every Coptic home in Egypt, and for teaching Coptic to the Coptic children in every country. Also in this issue *Father Dimitri Cozby*, reviews two recent Coptic language books. In his extensive review *Father Cozby* stresses the importance of Coptic literature for the study of early Christianity.

So in the same issue we have two scholars from different backgrounds, but both are neither Copts nor Egyptians, who call for the revival of the Coptic language, In the

same year two Coptic books appear independently in two different areas of the United States. It is ironic that at the same time the present government of Egypt is trying to attack the Coptic language as a part of its crackdown upon the Church. Among the charges officially brought against the Patriarch, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III,

"Since he came to the Papal see in 1971 he has done the following:

"During August 1973, he met with members of the editorial board of the weekly Al-Kirazah and asked them to make it an aim of the journal to revive the Coptic entity and the Coptic language. In addition, during January 1975, he started classes for teaching the Coptic language in Anba-Ruais, Abbassia. He also sent instructions to the churches to establish similar classes." (*A statement of the Egyptian Assistant Prosecutor, translated from the Supreme Court documents, Case Number 934, Page 4*)

If we have not here the admission of the Egyptian government itself in its official papers, it is difficult to believe that religious fanaticism can be practiced by a government of a civilized country in the twentieth century to the degree of attacking its own heritage because, after all, the Coptic language is the last stage in the development of the ancient Egyptian language. The attitude of the present Egyptian government towards the Coptic language is reminiscent of that of fanatic Muslim rulers, who were mostly of foreign origin, in the Middle Ages. The Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim (996-1021 A.D.) tried to mop out the language completely by barring its use even in the Coptic homes and streets. One was liable to have his tongue cut for the 'crime' of speaking in Coptic. Other rulers even hated hearing the Christian prayers in the churches which were always in Coptic. To avoid the attack on the churches if the Coptic prayers were heard, the priests had to put screens around the altar during the liturgy.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda has been carrying the cross in his exile in the Egyptian desert during the last three years because he was faithful in fulfilling his duties as a teacher and pastor for his flock. Continuing on the liturgical revival started by his predecessor, Pope Kyrillos VI, he took care to revive the Coptic language. For the first time, since the eighteenth century, Coptic children and Coptic youths started to speak Coptic. This was only one area of the Church revival under Pope Shenouda which the Muslim government could not tolerate.

*Editor*

## ***Acknowledgement***

Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations in this issue are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

The picture on the backcover is taken from the book *Pope Shenouda III*, published by St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Kensington, London, U.K.

# 1984 CALENDAR OF FASTS AND FEASTS

*	<b>THE SEVEN MAJOR FEASTS OF OUR LORD</b>
**	<b>The Seven Minor Feasts of Our Lord</b>
***	Feasts of Virgin Mary
****	Fasts

- \* January 7 - **CHRISTMAS**
- \*\* January 15 - **Circumcision of Our Lord**
- \*\*\*\* January 19 - Parameno (1)
- \* January 20 - **EPIPHANY**
- \*\* January 22 - **First Miracle of Our Lord at Cana**
- \*\*\* January 30 - Dormition of Virgin Mary
- \*\*\*\* February 13 - Fast of Nineveh (3)
- \*\* February 16 - **Entrance of Our Lord into the Temple**
- \*\*\*\* February 27 - Great Lent (55)
- March 19 - Feast of the Cross
- \*\*\* April 2 - Apparition of the Virgin at Zeitoun in 1968
- \* April 7 - **ANNUNCIATION**
- \* April 15 - **ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM**  
(PALM SUNDAY)
- \*\* April 19 - **Holy Thursday**
- \* April 22 - **EASTER**
- \*\* April 29 - **St. Thomas' Sunday**
- \*\*\* May 9 - Birth of Virgin Mary
- \* May 31 - **ASCENSION**
- \*\* June 1 - **Entrance of Our Lord into Egypt**
- \* June 10 - **PENTECOST**
- \*\*\*\* June 11 - Apostles' Fast (31)
- July 12 - Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul
- \*\*\*\* August 7 - Fast of the Virgin (15)
- \*\* August 19 - **Transfiguration of Our Lord**
- \*\*\* August 22 - Assumption of the Body of Virgin Mary
- September 11 - New Year's Day (Feast of the Martyrs)
- September 27 - Feast of the Cross
- \*\*\*\* November 25 - Christmas Fast (43)
- \*\*\* December 12 - Presentation of Virgin Mary into the Temple

# ***EMMANUEL (WHICH MEANS) GOD WITH US***

***His Holiness Pope Shenouda III***

*"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us)." (Matt. 1:23).*

*"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14, KJV).*

## ***God With Us***

Beautiful is the name given to Christ at His birth, Emmanuel, God with us, a name full of consolation because it contains much of God's love for us. The blessing of Christmas is this: that we feel that Christ is God with us, God among us, dwelling among us, and dwelling in us.

In reality, God loves humanity too much, He delights in humanity, he wishes to bestow on man the joy of being with Him and desires the human heart as His dwelling place.

When God created man, He created him in His own image and likeness and willed that man would be a place for His dwelling, He wished to live in man and fill his heart.

Thousands of years passed by while our good Lord tried to find a place in man's heart suitable for Him to dwell in, but "all have turned aside, together they have gone wrong, no one does good, not even one". (Rom. 3:12). The Lord did not find a place in their hearts to rest His head, so how about you my blessed friend?

God looks at your heart and says, "This is my resting place for ever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it". (Psalm 132:14) Thus said the Psalmist, "The Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation". (Ps. 132:13) This Zion is your soul which the Lord seeks, your heart which the Lord wishes to dwell in.

## ***God's Dwelling Place Among Men***

God's dwelling with and among men is an old story, it is the story of the Tabernacle where we see God living among His people, or the story of the Ark of the

Covenant, the symbol of God descending among the people.

As the presence of God among people points to the meeting tent so also does it point to the heavenly Jerusalem in eternity about which it was said, "Behold the dwelling of God is with men, he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them". (Rev. 21:3)

He demonstrated this meaning with a stronger parable of love. He said that He is the head and we are the members and the Apostle said that we as a Church, are the "Body of Christ". This is what was meant when the Lord said, "I am the vine, you are the branches". (John 15:5), and asked us to abide in Him as the branches are in the vine. This is also probably a part of the long prayer He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, when He said about His disciples, "I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one". (John 17:23, 26) God wants you to abide in Him and He in you.

God who came down in the Virgin's womb, to take a body from her, wishes to come down in you and fill you with love. The best dwelling place for God is within you. God is not pleased with heaven as his home but He stands at your door and knocks so you open for Him (Cp. Rev. 3:20). He considers your body a temple for his Holy Spirit to dwell in, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). He wishes to come to you and dwell within you with the Father. Listen to what He says, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him". (Jn. 14:23).

God who repeatedly insists to dwell within you addresses your soul which is dear to Him with these impressive words, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night". (Song of Solomon 5:2). Imagine all this time God standing by your door knocking and enduring for your sake the night rain and dew!

His true heaven is your heart; this is why He continuously asks you, "My son, give me your heart ... " (Prov. 23:26). He tells every human soul what the Psalmist said in his Psalm, "Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house; and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your Lord." (Psalm 45:10,11). The expression 'God with us' does not mean Emmanuel with us only during the period of His Incarnation, but for ever.

Thus says the Lord, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:20). He also says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them". (Matt. 18:20). The Lord remains with us through eternity. In this regard, He told the Father, "Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am." (John 17:24). Concerning this he reassured us saying, "And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (John 14:3). Thus says John the

beholder about the Heavenly Jerusalem, that it is the dwelling place of God with men. (Rev. 21:3).

Is it to such an extent O Lord? Yes, I wish to dwell with you and fill you, I find pleasure in your company and friendship, I like to be among you ... I am Emmanuel, God with you.

The Blessing of Christmas is centered in the expression "Emmanuel", God with us. Thus, my brother, if you feel that you are with God and God is with you, then you are truly enjoying the blessings of Christmas. Do not think of Christmas as the day we end the fast or as the day we celebrate the festal liturgy with its rituals and joyful tunes. Christmas, from the spiritual point of view, is the intimacy with Emmanuel Who is God with us. God does not ask anything of you save your heart to be His dwelling place. Don't ever think God wants more of you than this. You may say, "Lord I shall give all my wealth to the poor". He tells you, "Beloved, I want your heart, I want to dwell within you." You tell Him, "Lord, I shall fast and refrain from all things". He says to you, "I want your heart". You tell Him, "I shall pray all night". He answers, "If you pray all night without giving me your heart you pray in vain". Your prayers and worship are superficial if God has no dwelling place within you.

### ***Friendship with God***

God wishes to be friends with you. According to Scripture, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him". (Gen. 5:24). What a beautiful sight it is to imagine Enoch walking with God and what a profound feeling to comprehend how God would not do without Enoch, so He took him with Him.

The Apostle Paul describes the Lord's second coming on a cloud and our being carried away with Him, and he concludes this beautiful scene by saying, "And so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thes. 4:17, 18).

Here on earth we glimpse a strong observation in the lives of the saints. The saints always felt they were in the presence of God. They always saw Him with them, before them, and on their right hand.

The prophet Elijah often repeated saying, "As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand ..." (1 Kings. 18:15). Who among us always feels that he is standing in the presence of Emmanuel Who is God with us?...

Also David always felt the presence of God, thus he says, "I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8). What do you mean David? Is the Lord before you or on your right?... He is with me always and everywhere, and in all directions I feel the presence of God.

### ***Experiencing the Presence of God and Sin***

The person who feels that God is before him cannot fall into sin. He will definitely be embarrassed before God and will say, "God sees me at work, He hears me when



I speak." God has two eyes like flames of fire penetrating through the darkness. If we feel that God lives among us, we will never sin; our sins are a proof that we do not feel God's presence among us.

An incident in the life of St. Ephraem the Syrian confirms this. On one occasion, a harlot threatened to defame him if he would not sin with her. He pretended to agree on the condition that this take place in the town's market place. This surprised the woman and she said, "How can you do this in the market place? Wouldn't you feel shame with all the people around us?" The Saint answered her, "If you are ashamed to commit this before the people, why then aren't you ashamed to do so before the eyes of God, that penetrate the darkness?!" Those words had such a great effect on the woman that she repented because of him.

Do you think brother, that apostates are the only people who deny the existence of God? I assure you that every time you commit a sin, you have forgotten the presence of God and have practically denied his existence. If you truly believed in his presence, you would have been embarrassed. Emmanuel, God with us, gives us chastity, purity and holiness at all times.

### ***Experiencing the Presence of God and Fear***

Our belief in the presence of Emmanuel, God with us, gives us courage and not fear.

When Joshua started his ministry, God told him, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail or forsake you ... Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:5,9). The person who feels the presence of God, feels the presence of a great power that wipes out all fear and anxiety and gives him confidence and assurance ... Someone asks you an embarrassing question, you are panic-stricken and tell lies. Why? Because you are afraid. Why are you afraid? God is with you. No man can stand up against you all the days of your life.

The sin of fear is the sin of unbelief, unbelief in Emmanuel and His care. David was courageous and said, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? ... Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident" (Psalm 27:1,3) "With the Lord on my side I do not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6) In these words we observe the difference between the courage of the saints and the courage of the worldly people. The courage of the latter, stems from their trust in their own power and the courage of the saints stems from their faith in the presence of Emmanuel, God with them.

God appeared to the Apostle Paul in a vision by night and said, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you". (Acts 18:9,10)

Paul lived by those words, and was filled with strength by faith. He stood before Prince Lysias, the Governors Felix and Festus and King Agrippa and none of them

was able to harm him; on the contrary, they feared him. Why were you afraid O Kings and Princes of this prisoner tied in chains? They answer, "We are not afraid of him but of the God who is with him, from the Lord dwelling within him. Paul himself we can deal with but not when he says, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'. (Gal. 2:20)".

What did Prince Lysias do with Paul when he put him under arrest? Did he hurt him in any way? No. He got together an armed force consisting of two hundred soldiers with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, and they escorted Paul safely to Felix the Governor of Caesarea (Acts 23:23,24). Truly Lord, Thou art with us.

Paul stood before Felix, "and as he argued about justice and self control, and future judgment, Felix was alarmed" (Acts 24:25).

The Governor was frightened by his chained prisoner, by the marvelous power that came out of him, by God Who was with him, by Emmanuel ...

Paul also stood before King Agrippa. The result was that the King told him, "In a short time you think to make me a Christian!". (Acts 26:28). He witnessed on his behalf saying, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment" (Acts 26:31).

This is just an idea about what happens when our God Emmanuel is with us and destroys every power that stands in the way of His servants so no harm can befall them.

This is Emmanuel who was with the three youths in the fiery furnace "and the fire had not had any power over their bodies, the hair of their heads was not singed, their mantles were not harmed and no smell of fire had come upon them". (Dan. 3:27). Nebuchadnezzar was astonished saying, "there is no other God who is able to deliver in this way.". (Dan. 3:29)

*Translated by Lily Soliman*

# ***CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TYPES AND PROPHECIES***

***From A Sermon of St. Gregory of Nyssa  
For The Day Of The Lights***

## ***Feast of Epiphany***

The time has come and bears in its course the remembrance of holy mysteries, purifying man, — mysteries which purge out from the soul and body even that sin which is hard to cleanse away, and which bring us back to that fairness of our first estate which God, the best of artificers, impressed upon us.

## ***Christ Recapitulates All Humanity***

*Today Christ is baptized by John that He might cleanse him who was defiled, that He might bring the Spirit from above, and exalt man to heaven, that he who had fallen might be raised up and he who had cast him down might be put to shame ...* But Christ, the repairer of his evil-doing, assumes manhood in its fulness, and saves man, and becomes the type and figure of us all, to sanctify the first fruits of every action, and leave to His servants no doubt in their zeal for the tradition. *Baptism, then, is a purification from sins, a remission of trespasses, a cause of renovation and regeneration.*

## ***Function of Water in the Sacrament***

It is not the water that bestows this gift (for in that case it were a thing more exalted than all creation), but the command of God, and the visitation of the Spirit that comes sacramentally to set us free. But water serves to express the cleansing. For since we are wont by washing in water to render our body clean when it is soiled by dirt or mud, we therefore apply it also in the sacramental action, and display the spiritual brightness by that which is subject to our senses. Let us however, if it seems well, persevere in enquiring more fully and more minutely concerning Baptism, *starting, as from the fountain-head, from the Scriptural declaration, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).* Why are both named, and why is not the Spirit alone accounted sufficient for the completion of Baptism? Man, as we know full well, is compound, not simple: and therefore the cognate and similar medicines are assigned for healing to him who is twofold and

conglomerate: — for his visible body, water, the sensible element, — for his soul, which we cannot see, the Spirit invisible, invoked by faith, present unspeakably. For "the Spirit breathes where He wills, and thou hearest His voice, but canst not tell whence He cometh or whither He goeth" (John 3:8)<sup>(1)</sup>. He blesses the body that is baptized, and the water that baptizes. Despise not, therefore, the Divine laver, nor think lightly of it, as a common thing, on account of the use of water. For the power that operates is mighty, and wonderful are the things that are wrought thereby. For this holy altar, too, by which I stand, is stone, ordinary in its nature, nowise different from the other slabs of stone that build our houses and adorn our pavements; but seeing that it was consecrated to the service of God, and received the benediction, it is a holy table, an altar undefiled, no longer touched by the hands of all, but of the priests alone, and that with reverence. The bread again is at first common bread, but when the sacramental action consecrates it, it is called, and becomes, the Body of Christ. So with the sacramental oil; so with the wine: though before the benediction they are of little value, each of them, after the sanctification bestowed by the Spirit, has its several operation.

Likewise the mantle of one of the prophets, though it was but a goat's skin, made Elisha renowned in the whole world. And the wood of the Cross is of saving efficacy for all men, though it is, as I am informed, a piece of a poor tree, less valuable than most trees are. So a bramble bush showed to Moses the manifestation of the presence of God. So the remains of Elisha raised a dead man to life. So clay gave sight to him that was blind from the womb. And all these things, though they were matter without soul or sense, were made the means for the performance of the great marvels wrought by them, when they received the power of God. Now, by a similar train of reasoning, water also, though it is nothing else than water, renews the man to spiritual regeneration, when the grace from above hallows it.

### ***Old Testament Proclamation of Baptism***

Not only do the Gospels, written after the Crucifixion, proclaim the grace of Baptism, but, even before the Incarnation of our Lord, the ancient Scripture everywhere prefigured the likeness of our regeneration; not clearly manifesting its form, but foreshowing, in dark sayings, the love of God to man. And as the lamb was proclaimed by anticipation, and the Cross was foretold by anticipation, so too, was Baptism shown forth by action and by word.

### ***Old Testament Types***

Let us recall its types to those who love good thoughts — for the festival season of necessity demands their recollection.

*(1) Hagar and the well (Gen. 21:9-21; Gal. 4:22-31)*

Hagar, the handmaid of Abraham (whom Paul treats allegorically in reasoning with the Galatians), being sent forth from her master's house by the anger of Sarah — for

a servant suspected in regard to her master is a hard thing for lawful wives to bear — was wandering in desolation to a desolate land with her babe Ishmael at her breast. And when she was in straits for the needs of life, and was herself nigh unto death, and her child yet more so — for the water in the skin was spent (since it was not possible that the Synagogue, she who once dwelt among the figures of the perennial Fountain, should have all that was needed to support life), an angel unexpectedly appears, and shows her a well of living water, and drawing thence, she saves Ishmael. Behold, then, a sacramental type: how from the very first *it is by the means of living water that salvation comes to him that was perishing* — water that was not before, but was given as a boon by an angel's means.

(2) *Rebekah and the well (Gen. 24)*

At a later time, Isaac was to be wedded. Abraham's servant is sent to make the match, so as to secure a bride for his master, and finds Rebekah at the well: and *a marriage that was to produce the race of Christ had its beginning and its first covenant in water.*

(3) *The wells of Isaac (Gen. 26:15 - 25)*

Isaac himself also, when he was ruling his flocks, digged wells at all parts of the desert, which the aliens stopped and filled up, for a type of all those impious men of later days who hindered the grace of Baptism, and talked loudly in their struggle against the truth. Yet the martyrs and the priests overcame them by digging the wells, and the gift of Baptism overflowed the whole world.

(4) *Rachel and the well (Gen. 29:1-12)*

*Jacob also, hastening to seek a bride, met Rachel unexpectedly at the well.* And a great stone lay upon the well, which a multitude of shepherds were wont to roll away when they came together, and then gave water to themselves and to their flocks. But *Jacob alone rolls away the stone, and waters the flocks of his spouse.* The thing is, I think, a dark saying, a shadow of what should come. For what is the stone that is laid but Christ Himself? for of Him Isaiah says, "And I will lay in the foundations of Sion a costly stone, precious, elect (Is. 28:16 not exactly from LXX)." and Daniel likewise, "A stone was cut out without hands (Dan. 2:45)," that is, Christ was born without a man. For as it is a new and marvelous thing that a stone should be cut out of the rock without a hewer or stone-cutting tools, so it is a thing beyond all wonder that an offspring should appear from an unwedded Virgin. *There was lying, then, upon the well the spiritual stone, Christ, concealing in the deep and in mystery the laver of regeneration which needed much time — as it were a long rope — to bring it to light.* And none rolled away the stone save Israel, who is mind seeing God. But he both draws up the water and gives drink to the sheep of Rachel; that is, he reveals the hidden mystery, and gives living water to the flock of the Church.

*(5) The rods of Jacob (Gen. 30:37 - 43)*

Add to this also the history of *the three rods of Jacob*. For from the time when the three rods were laid by the well, Laban the polytheist thenceforth became poor, and Jacob became rich and wealthy in herds. Now let Laban be interpreted of the devil, and Jacob of Christ. *For after the institution of Baptism Christ took away all the flock of Satan and Himself grew rich.*

*(6) Moses in the basket (Ex. 2:1 - 10)*

Again, the great Moses, when he was a goodly child, and yet at the breast, falling under the general and cruel decree which the hard-hearted Pharaoh made against the Hebrews, was cast into the Nile, and was preserved by the daughter of Pharaoh, and was nurtured near the water; for the Law, and those daily sprinklings of the Hebrews which were a little later to be made plain in the perfect and marvelous Baptism, are near to grace.

*(7) Crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14; 1 Cor. 10:1,2)*

Again, according to the view of the inspired Paul, *the people itself, by passing through the Red Sea, proclaimed the good tidings of salvation by water*. The people passed over, and the Egyptian king with his host was engulfed, and by these actions this Sacrament was foretold. For even now, whensoever the people is in the water of regeneration, fleeing from Egypt, from the burden of sin, it is set free and saved; but the devil with his own servants (I mean, of course, the spirits of evil), is choked with grief, and perishes, deeming the salvation of men to be his own misfortune.

*(8) Passage of the Jordan (Josh. 3 & 4)*

Even these instances might be enough to confirm our present position; but the lover of good thoughts must yet not neglect what follows. The people of the Hebrews, as we learn, after many sufferings, and after accomplishing their weary course in the desert, *did not enter the land of promise until it had first been brought, with Joshua for its guide and the pilot of its life, to the passage of the Jordan*. But it is clear that Joshua also, who set up the twelve stones in the stream, was anticipating the coming of the twelve disciples, the ministers of Baptism.

*(9) Sacrifice of Elijah (1 Kings 18)*

Again, that marvelous *sacrifice of the old Tishbite* that passes all human understanding, what else does it do but prefigure in action the Faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and redemption? For when all the people of the Hebrews had trodden underfoot the religion of their fathers, and fallen into the error of polytheism, and their king Ahab was deluded by idolatry, with Jezebel, of ill-omened name, as the wicked partner of his life, and the vile prompter of his impiety, the prophet, filled with the grace of the Spirit, coming to a meeting with Ahab, withstood the priests of Baal in a marvelous and wondrous contest in the sight of the king and all the people;

and by proposing to them the task of sacrificing the bullock without fire, he displayed them in a ridiculous and wretched plight, vainly praying and crying aloud to gods that were not. At last, himself invoking his own and the true God, he accomplished the test proposed with further exaggerations and additions. For he did not simply by prayer bring down the fire from heaven upon the wood when it was dry, but exhorted and enjoined the attendants to bring abundance of water. And when he had thrice poured out the barrels upon the cleft wood, he kindled at his prayer the fire from out of the water, that by the contrariety of the elements, so concurring in friendly cooperation, he might show with superabundant force the power of his own God. Now herein, *by that wondrous sacrifice, Elijah clearly proclaimed to us the sacramental rite of Baptism* that should afterwards be instituted. *For the fire was kindled by water being poured upon it, so that it is clearly shown that where the ly, and illuminates the faithful.*

*(10) Washing in the Jordan (2 Kings 5)*

When *Naaman the Syrian*, who was diseased with leprosy, came to Elisha as a suppliant, he cleansed him by washing in Jordan, clearly indicating what should come, both by the use of water generally, and by the dipping in the river in particular. For Jordan alone of rivers, receiving in itself the first-fruits of sanctification and benediction, conveyed in its channel to the whole world, as it were from some fount in the type afforded by itself, the grace of Baptism.

***Old Testament Prophecies***

These then are indications in deed and act of regeneration by Baptism. Let us for the rest consider the *prophecies* of it in words and language.

*Isaiah* cried saying, "Wash you, make you clean, put away evil from your souls;" (Is. 1:16 *LXX*) and *David*, "Draw nigh to Him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed" (Ps. 34:5 *LXX*)" And *Ezekiel*, writing more clearly and plainly than them both, says, "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I give you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and my Spirit will I put within you. (Ez. 36:25 - 27, not exactly as *LXX*)"

Most manifestly also does Zechariah prophesy of Joshua (Zech. 3:3 - 4) who was clothed with the filthy garment (to wit, the flesh of a servant, even ours), and stripping him of his ill-favoured raiment adorns him with the clean and fair apparel; teaching us by the figurative illustration that verily *in the Baptism of Jesus ÷ all we, putting off our sins like some poor and patched garment, are clothed in the holy and most fair garment of regeneration.*

And where shall we place that oracle of *Isaiah*, which cries to the wilderness, "Be glad, O thirsty wilderness: let the desert rejoice and blossom as a lily: and the desolate places of Jordan shall blossom and shall rejoice"? (Is. 35:1,2 *LXX*) For it is clear that it is not to places without soul or sense that he proclaims the good tidings of joy: but he speaks, by the figure of the desert, of the soul that is parched and unadorned, even as David also, when he says, "My soul is unto Thee as a thirsty land," (Ps. 143:6 *LXX*) and, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." (Ps. 42:2) So again the Lord says in the Gospels, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink," (John 7:37) and to the woman of Samaria, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (John 4:13,14) And "the majesty of Carmel" (Is. 35:2) is given to the soul that bears the likeness to the desert, that is, the grace bestowed through the Spirit. For since Elijah dwelt in Carmel, and the mountain became famous and renowned by the virtue of him who dwelt there, and since moreover John the Baptist, illustrious in the spirit of Elijah, sanctified the Jordan, therefore the prophet foretold that "*the majesty of Carmel*" should be given to the river. And "the glory of Lebanon" (Is. 35:2) from the similitude of its lofty trees, he transfers to the river. For as great Lebanon presents a sufficient cause of wonder in the very trees which it brings forth and nourishes, so is the Jordan glorified by regenerating men and planting them in the Paradise of God: and of them, as the words of the Psalmist say, ever blooming and bearing the foliage of virtues, "its leaf does not wither," (Ps. 1:4) and God shall be glad, receiving their fruit in due season, rejoicing, like a good planter, in his own works.

And the inspired *David*, foretelling also the voice which the Father uttered from heaven upon the Son at His Baptism, that He might lead the hearers, who till then had looked upon that low estate of His Humanity which was perceptible by their senses, to the dignity of nature that belongs to the Godhead, wrote in his book that passage, "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters ... The voice of the Lord is full of majesty" (Ps. 29:3,4) But here we must make an end of the testimonies from the Divine Scriptures: for *the discourse would extend to an infinite length if one should seek to select every passage in detail*, and set them forth in a single book.

### ***Concluding Prayer***

And now we have spoken sufficiently for the holy subject of the day, which the circling year brings to us at appointed periods. We shall do well in what remains to end our discourse by turning it to the loving Giver of so great a boon, offering to Him a few words as the requital of great things. For Thou verily, O Lord, art the pure and eternal fount of goodness, Who didst justly turn away from us, and in loving kindness didst have mercy upon us. Thou didst hate, and wert reconciled; Thou didst curse, and didst bless; Thou didst banish us from Paradise, and didst recall us; Thou didst strip off the fig-tree leaves, an unseemly covering, and put upon us a costly garment; Thou didst open the prison, and didst release the condemned; Thou didst sprinkle us



with clean water, and cleanse us from our filthiness. No longer shall Adam be confounded when called by Thee, nor hide himself, convicted by his conscience, cowering in the thicket of Paradise. Nor shall the flaming sword encircle Paradise around, and make the entrance inaccessible to those that draw near; but all is turned to joy for us that were the heirs of sin: Paradise, yea, heaven itself may be trodden by man: and the creation, in the world and above the world, that once was at variance with itself, is knit together in friendship: and we men are made to join in the angels' song, offering the worship of their praise to God. For all these things then let us sing to God that hymn of joy, which lips touched by the Spirit long ago sang loudly: "Let my soul be joyful in the Lord: for He hath clothed me with a garment of salvation, and hath put upon me a robe of gladness: as on a bridegroom He hath set a mitre upon me, and as a bride hath He adorned me with fair array." (Is. 61:10, not exactly LXX) And verily the Adorner of the bride is Christ, Who is, and was, and shall be, blessed now and for evermore. Amen.

### *Notes*

1. Translation of the N&PN text.
2. Septuagint
3. If "the Baptism of Jesus" here means (as seems most likely) the Baptism of our Lord by S. John, not the Baptism instituted by our Lord, then we are apparently intended to understand that *our Lord, summing up humanity in Himself*, represented by His Baptism that of all who should thereafter be baptized.

# ***ABBA SHENUTE OF ATRIPE: FIRST HOMILY ON THE PATRIARCHS***

*Translated by Fr. Dimitri Cozby*

## ***Introduction***

The following is a brief sermon preached by Abba Shenute of the White Monastery (d. ca. 461). Later editors have entitled it "*On the Patriarchs*" since Shenute begins by speaking about the Old Testament saints Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The patriarchs, however, are not the true subject. The theme of the homily is the need for both outward piety and inner vigilance and faith in the life of a monk. It is easy for one to become captivated by the external aspects of the spiritual life. This is especially true, as Abba Shenute points out, of monks, who are distinguished from other Christians by their outward mode of life. The monks are tempted to think of the communal life, prayer, fasting, etc., as the essence of the Gospel rather than as the means to a higher goal, just as it is easy for the layman to think of church attendance, daily prayer, contributing to charity and to the Church as the only demands placed upon the Christian. Abba Shenute puts an end to such delusions.

Abba Shenute does this by contrasting the way of life of the patriarchs with that of his monks and then pointing out a paradox: the patriarchs led "wordly" lives, yet they were closer to God than the monks who have renounced the world for the sake of God's Kingdom. The patriarchs lived in the world, enjoying all its luxuries. The monks have not only abandoned luxuries but have even denied themselves the necessities of life so that they may devote themselves to the Gospel. Yet, paradoxically, it is the patriarchs whom God has honored, not the ascetics.

Why is this so? In Abba Shenute's view, his monks have too often attended to the externals and forgotten the spiritual center of the monastic and of the Christian life, vigilance in the face of temptations, resolute renunciation of sins, practice of the virtues, strong faith and the fear of God in the heart. Without these, Abba Shenute tells us, the other things we rely on to bring us closer to God, fasting, attendance at worship, etc., will fail. Of course, Abba Shenute does not say that we can neglect the externals; that, to him, would be as bad as the present situation. He argues for a balance, holding to the external aspects of the Christian life while renewing the inner spirituality which gives them purpose and depth.

Abba Shenute employs a number of devices to convey his message. In the translation we have indicated in parentheses Scripture passages which he quotes or to which he

alludes. For Shenute the Bible is a primary source both of ideas and of examples to illustrate his points. The lives of the patriarchs, from which he draws his main examples, are in Genesis. He refers to Genesis three, or perhaps four, more times (21:8; 14:15-16; 48:15-16; and [?] 17:1-2). The rest of his quotations from or allusions to the Bible are from the New Testament. Six books are represented: Matthew, Mark, Luke, I Timothy, I Peter, and Revelation. Abba Shenute's use of the Scriptures bears out his own comment in the homily: "If a man keep himself from the ways of this world, his heart will receive light from the Scriptures."

Another interesting element of Abba Shenute's style is the use of parables to clarify his points. There are three in this short homily. Two use the image of the walls of a city which must be properly manned if the city is to be safe from attackers. The third compares the monk to a rich man who must be ever vigilant to prevent thieves from breaking in and stealing his possessions. All three parables illustrate the Christian's need for vigilance and perseverance in the virtues, along with external piety, in order to defend against sin and to grow closer to God.

To the best of my knowledge this homily has never before been translated into English. The translation is based on the Sahidic Coptic text of J. Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia*, (Vol. IV; CSCO 73/Copt. 5; Louvain, 1954; pp. 22-26). H. Weismann's Latin version from the same series (CSCO 108/Copt. 12; Louvain, 1964; vol. IV, pp. 12-15) was consulted where the Coptic was unclear, but Weismann's interpretations were not always followed. The Scripture references are from Weismann's edition, though some corrections have been necessary. Of course, the wording of the quotations is from Abba Shenute's Coptic.

This is a colloquial translation, intended for the general reader rather than a literal one for the scholar. Scholarly apparatus such as notes has been omitted. On the other hand, this is a true translation, not a paraphrase. My goal has been to convey the flavor and impact of Abba Shenute's preaching, while faithfully rendering his words and ideas.

My special thanks to Dr. Orval S. Wintermute and Dr. Melvin K. H. Peters of Duke University, Durham, NC, for their help and advice. Of course, final responsibility for any error must rest with me.

D.C.

### ***Translation***

A few words spoken in the presence of some fellow monks:

Truly, when I consider our fathers of yore, I feel like one who has never known God. Is it not a marvel that our father Abraham, our father Isaac, our father Jacob married wives, raised children, took wives for their sons, gave their daughters to husbands, made marriage feasts for them, made great banquets when they weaned their sons, as it is written, "Abraham made a great banquet on the day when Isaac, his son, was weaned" (Gen. 21:8)? They held celebrations, they ate, they drank in moderation. Every kind of livestock they had in abundance! They had gold in abundance, silver in

abundance! They had all their property in abundance, wealth in every form! Yet the Lord God spoke with them, telling them everything, and He nourished them. Their houses were full of every good thing. And His angels guarded them, as Jacob said, "It is God who nourishes me from my youth, His angel who keeps me from every evil" (Gen. 48:15f.). And not only that but, through them, many upon earth were blessed. Their heritage was apportioned to a multitude of men, as many as the sands. But also concerning those who go to God — all those who die among us, we Christians, from king to priest even to the martyrs who shed their blood — the Scripture says concerning them, "You will give rest to them in the bosom of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" (cf. Lk. 16:22). Why have these honors and this great glory come to them? Is it not on account of their faith and their love for the Lord God and their sinlessness? As the Lord said to them, "Do what is pleasing in My presence and be sinless and let Me establish My covenant with you" (cf. Gen. 17:1f). And above all, there is their hospitality. Or do we not read about these things in their whole life?

But we, wretched ones, we make ourselves poor, we are hungry, we thirst, we bear a host of afflictions, saying, "It is for God's sake that we do these things," even down to our inferior clothes and food, so that often we may not consume even water to satisfaction, much less wine or meat or numerous other things. Our heart has dried up; our belly has dried up; our flesh has dried up. But sins of every kind from the demon adversary have not dried up within us. Many times we desire only to cool our tongue on account of thirst, since it is like something withered. Yet still it slanders, or rather we slander by it, and we gossip, we ridicule, we destroy the hearts of others, we envy, we hate, we argue, we do these things and many others and do not despise them.

I know that it grieves you to hear these words. However, blessed are they whose flesh and stomach and mouth are dried up for Jesus' sake, and in whom all that is evil is even more than dried up. Blessed are they whose eyes have failed on account of thirst for Jesus, because they have blinded the devil. And he is indeed blind compared to those with whom Jesus abides.

Woe to those who lead the devil on until they bring him into their houses and into the closet of their soul, because Jesus does not abide with them. Or, if He is with them, He is often on their tongue and not in their heart.

Since it is our responsibility not to sin, let us not scorn grace, but let us give glory to God who has left us our free will. Take the men whom evil spirits tested. If they had been able to resist, they would not have put up with those spirits to the point that the spirits cast them into the fire and into the water and laid them low with other great injuries which they did to them (cf. Mtt. 17:15; Mk. 9:17, 22; Lk. 9:39, 42). So you see, you are negligent in not trampling upon Satan and his evil ones until we come to be in great distress due to our enslavement to sin. We have not killed sin in ourselves, as have those who killed the body and also killed sin in themselves, because they are vigilant and keep vigil (cf. I Peter 5:8).

The wall may be good which encircles the city. But if a watch is not kept upon it, the barbarians will take the city, like one which has no defense. The works of the man who

labors bring him benefit. But when he is not vigilant in labor, sin will despoil him like those who could not grieve because they had given themselves over to pollution, for the working of every impurity.

Moreover, if a city has small walls, and they have not been raised very high, and yet it resists its enemy and is victorious over him, truly this is a shame and a reproach to another city which had been taken though its walls were great. I say this because, if there is a man whose good deeds are few but who fights against sin and conquers it, this is a shame and a reproach to the man who embraces good works and yet is conquered by sin.

For it is fitting for us truly to be faithful even to death, (Rev. 2:10), O beloved brothers, to exercise ourselves in all piety (I Tim. 4:7) in order that we may escape from the threat of reproach before the holy judgment seat in the day of our arraignment in the court of God, when all the angels stand before him, with the archangels, the *cherubin*, with the *seraphin*, the authorities, the dominions, and the glories, awaiting the verdict which will come.

Concerning this the Savior said, "Let your loins be girded, your lamps full; become like servants who anticipate when their Lord shall return to the bridal chamber, in order that, when he comes and summons them, they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants" (Lk. 12: 35-37). If a man keep himself from the ways of this world, his heart will receive light from the Scriptures.

Consider a wealthy man today in a city, where everyone knows he has many possessions. If he sleeps in the night and becomes careless, robbers come and despoil him and take all his possessions. If, however, when they come, they find the lamp blazing in the house, they fear that men are awake, because they saw the light in the house. Even if the household sleeps the robbers turn back because of the light blazing in the house. This is also the way, O brothers, of a man who has fear of God in his heart. Whether he sleeps or he is awake when the robbers come to despoil him, the fear of God which is in his heart and the angels who watch over him rebuke them, and they depart, as Jacob said, "There is an angel who preserves me from all evil" (Gen. 48:16).

*Of Sinuthios.*

# ***HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS OF THE COPTIC CHURCH UNDER THE SWORD OF ISLAM***

## ***PART II: THE EIGHTH CENTURY***

*Raef Marcus, D.M.D.*

With the turn of the Eighth Century, the Arab Muslim Empire had already been established with its boundaries extending from the Asian Steppe to the French-Spanish border. The Ommayad Caliphs were still in power till the middle of the century, when the "Abbassids" took over and moved the capital of the empire to Baghdad.

The change of dynasties made no difference to the Egyptians, the governors of Egypt were still Arabs, lacking administrative skills and were involved in corruption and in collecting as much as they could in taxes and revenues from the Egyptians. Fifty-six governors ruled Egypt during the eighth century, with an average of less than two years for each governor.

The majority of the Egyptian population were still the Christian Copts and whatever oppression existed was mainly borne by them, and it is remarkable that in spite of such intermittent oppression and their invariable position of inferiority, and also the temptation to escape the poll-tax and disabilities by the simple process of conversion to Islam, the Copts in general remained steadfast to their faith, in so much that about AD 732 the treasurer, Obeid-Allah, finding that Islam was making no progress among the Egyptians, imported five thousand Arabs and settled them in the eastern part of the Nile Delta.

Most governors appear to have come to Egypt escorted by an Arab army estimated at different times at 6,000 or 10,000 or 20,000 men; and many of these soldiers settled in Egyptian towns and intermarried with Coptic women. In the meantime all techniques of Arab brutality and Muslim persecution and oppression were used against the Copts, from execution, torture, arbitrary fines, vexatious passports, destruction of churches, and mutilation of monks, and on top of all the characteristic method of Islamic persecution that is the continuous attack and humiliation of the Copts' spiritual leader the Patriarch of Alexandria.

### ***Abba Alexander II (AD 705-730)***

After the death of Abba Simon in AD 701, the governor Abd-al-Aziz, was determined to prevent the Copts from electing a new patriarch. After four years of supplication from the high ranking Copts, he agreed to let them choose a new leader for the Church.

During the first year of Alexander's administration, the governor sent one of his generals named Yezid, who mutilated all the monks in the desert of Scete, and laid a poll-tax of one dinar upon each, and commanded that they should make no more monks after those whom he mutilated. This was the first poll-tax paid by the monks. Abd-al-Aziz also compelled all the bishops to furnish an extra two thousand dinars each, besides the taxes they used to pay. This sum they paid every year since then. He also compelled many persons to become Muslims, otherwise they faced death. He entered into the Monastery of Helwan, on the night of Easter. He looked at a picture of Our Lady the Holy Virgin Mary and spat at her face saying, "If I find an opportunity I will eliminate the Christians from the land." Abd-al-Aziz and his son died forty days after this incident. He was succeeded by Abd-Allah ibn Abd-al-Malik. The historian described him as being like a fierce wild beast, so that when he sat at table, men were put to death in his presence and their blood spurted out into the dish from which he was eating, and he took pleasure in that.

Abba Alexander had to travel to Misr to salute Abd-Allah, according to the custom, but when Abd-Allah saw him he asked his attendants, "Who is this man?" They replied, "This is the father and Patriarch of all the Christians."

So he arrested him and handed him over to one of his officers to whom he said, "Humiliate him in whatever way you like!" The Patriarch remained under arrest suffering all kinds of torture. The Copts continued to petition the governor for his release. But he agreed only after the Patriarch promised to pay a fine of three thousand dinars. The Patriarch and his deacon had to tour the cities of Egypt to beg for this money.

Abd-Allah used to assemble to himself the bishops saying to them, "You are enemies of my God, and if a man slays one of you, God will pardon him." He also doubled the poll-tax or *Gizya*; eventually many churches were ruined for that reason. He also ordered that no Christian should be buried unless his family paid a certain tax for the dead.

Great trials were brought by Abd-Allah, upon the Copts, many were killed, and many were exiled to the desert where they perished. The historian Sawiris mentions that there was trouble and confusion in the land from North to South, writing in his own words, "How great then were the sadness and misery and sighing in the provinces of Egypt on account of the deeds of these Muslim rulers."

Abd-Allah was replaced after two years by another Arab governor named Kurrah. On his arrival to Misr, the Patriarch Alexander went according to the custom to salute

him, and again Kurrah arrested the Patriarch and demanded from him a fine of three thousand dinars. and when the Patriarch informed the governor that he could not afford to pay such a fine, the latter told him, "You have to sell your own flesh until you pay the fine." The Patriarch had to tour the towns and cities again begging for more money to pay this fine. Even that did not satisfy the governor. He later loaded the Patriarch with iron fetters and cast him into prison, where he remained for seven days. After he was released, wicked people went and surrounded his residence by command of Kurrah. They seized the Patriarch and his companions; they threw him to the ground and beat his companions and tortured them till their blood flowed on the ground. During this persecution, Kurrah took all the property of the Church, even the vessels in which the Eucharist was offered; the Copts had to replace them with chalices of glass and patens of wood, instead of the gold and silver vessels. Kurrah also issued a decree, that whoever died from the Copts, his family would not inherit his property, but it would go to the governor. He later took the endowments of the bishops. So men began to flee from place to place with their wives and children, even no place would harbor them. Because of those troubles and the exaction of taxes and the tyranny of the Muslim governor, people found shelter in the churches.

Kurrah was soon to be replaced by Usamah, who started his glorious deeds by commanding that no one should lodge in churches. He mutilated more monks and branded each one of them on his left hand. He later ordered some monks to have one of their limbs cut and they became lame for life. He shaved off the beards of many, and slew a great multitude and put out the eyes of many without mercy. He issued a decree to his officers saying, "I have delivered up to you the lives of the people, the bishops, and the monks as well as the churches, and whomever you kill take his stuff and money and cattle; respect no one." Accordingly the officials laid the country to waste, they even carried off the columns and marble of the churches.

In the meantime in AD 717, Omar ibn Abd-el-Aziz, became Caliph of the Arab Empire. He wrote a letter charged with sadness to Egypt in which he said, "Omar commands; those who wish to remain as they are and in their own land must follow the religion of Muhammed as I do; but let those who do not wish to do so, go forth from my dominion." He also commanded that whoever spoke with the Coptic language had his tongue cut.

This decree was very drastic to the Copts, it changed the tide and ended for good the dignity of the Copts, their freedom, their wealth and their hold on the economy of the country. The Christians, unwilling to change their religion, gave up all the money and property they had, and whoever was a government official had to resign and they became subservient to the Muslims.

The next Caliph, Yezid, started his reign by commanding that the crosses should be broken in every place and that pictures in the churches should be removed.

It is to be mentioned here that oppression and persecution came from various levels of the government, from the Caliph, from the governor, and from local authorities. Even the treasurer had his own share in persecuting the Copts. In AD 724 Obeid



Allah ibn el-Habhab was appointed a treasurer over Egypt. Four months after he took office, he commanded that the mark of a lion be stamped on the hands of the Christians, and anyone found without the mark was fined and had his hand cut off.

Such persecution led to a rising of the Copts in Bilbeys and in Damietta, which, although suppressed for the time, broke out again in the city of Bana and the city of Samannud, and in many places in the Delta of the Nile.

Later on when the official entered the city of Alexandria to mark the Christians he seized the Patriarch in order to brand him, but he refused and requested to be allowed to go to the governor. The Patriarch was then arrested for a while and later was carried to Misr. Obeid Allah would not release him without branding him. So he kept him in prison. A few days later, the Patriarch fell sick, and the illness increased each day upon him. The Copts begged Obeid Allah to release him, but he refused. The Patriarch managed to escape, and took a boat heading for Alexandria accompanied by Abba Shamul the bishop of Wasim. When they reached Tarnut, the blessed Patriarch Alexander went to his rest.

When Obeid Allah learned that the Patriarch had escaped, he dispatched an officer to bring him back. The officer, realizing that the Patriarch went to his rest, left his body and seized Abba Shamul and conducted him to Obeid Allah who ordered him to pay a fine of one thousand dinars. The bishop being very poor could not pay a single dinar. Obeid Allah then handed the bishop to two Muslim officers, who hauled and dragged him away through the streets of Misr, until they brought him to the door of the church of St. George in Babylon, trailing him along. Then they stripped him of his garment, and clothed him in hair-cloth and hung him up by his arms and scourged him with whips of cowhide. They continued for a week to torture him in this way until he died.

For 25 years, Abba Alexander sat on the throne of St. Mark, and a thorough look at his sufferings and the trial of the Copts during that period, would reveal one characteristic fact which may describe well the Muslim techniques of persecution, and this fact is that everytime the governor plans a systematic persecution of the Christians he starts by arresting the Patriarch, and he humiliates him, tortures him and puts him in severe financial burden by heavy fines, and then declares a mass persecution all over the land.

The eighth century is not covered yet, we are still in its first thirty years, and in the next article we will describe in detail the sufferings of Abba Michael I, the 46th Patriarch of Alexandria who happened to be presiding over the Church of Egypt during the transition of power from the Ommayad to the Abbassids.

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## ***COPTIC ORTHODOXY TODAY: ETHNICISM, DEAD END, OR MERE SURVIVAL?***

*L. MacCoull*

The Coptic Orthodox church, both in Egypt and abroad, is facing the most radical crisis in its 1532 years of autonomous existence, on the eve of the year 1700 of its traditional calendar. How it comes through this crisis will determine the fate of its members, who are themselves human beings in search of their own authenticity amidst the global threats of contemporary existence. One encounters several approaches to this crisis situation, each with its own partiality and limitations. They may each be examined in turn.

The first pattern is that of regarding Coptic Orthodoxy as simply an ethnic identity: Coptic equals Christian Egyptian (-American, -Canadian, -Australian or other). Not as a particular body of Christian praxis and obedience, but just as an ethnic label. Most Copts in fact attend religious services not because they feel motivated by a belief in a divine being, or are aware of obeying a church commandment or canon law, but because to do so is the only ethnic, and indeed personal, identity they have. Churches are crowded only at Christmas and, most of all, Good Friday and Easter: an expression of the still-reigning Mediterranean value of family solidarity rather than of a belief in the incarnation or resurrection of a divinity. People are attached to these observances out of childhood memory (that odd-tasting fish on Easter Monday) rather than out of any theological understanding. They profess to enjoy the sound of the chant without understanding a single word of any text being sung. And attendance at such services, especially for those who are forced to work on Sundays, is often the only means they have of distinguishing themselves from their non-Coptic fellow citizens. They go out of ethnic-solidarity sentiment, not out of belief.

At the present day it is fashionable to be ethnic. The above-described syndrome, however, obviously entails the danger of having Coptic Orthodoxy become simply a quaint cult, observed by curious anthropologists in the great human museum of odd and unusual folkways. The church ceases to be a body of dogma and becomes an irrelevant sentimentalism. The outcome is obvious: it is dropped, except for society Easter houseparties, by anyone of any education and culture (possibly except for bap-

tisms and weddings, even when persons of only partly Coptic descent are involved) It becomes an embarrassment.

The second pattern is that of the reign of tradition. Clearly *paradosis*, that which is handed down, is the dominating definition-structure of every form of non-Latin Christianity. ("We never needed a Reformation.") But tradition can become a dead end. That whole set of perceptions that are called non-Chalcedonian Christology are today repeated and repeated by people of some small level of education in a shrill and insistent effort to 'prove' that they are, in some *sub specie aeternitatis* way, 'right'. There is not a single Coptic theologian (equipped with the proper degrees from respectable institutions) who is prepared to work through the fact that the Late Antique Neoplatonic/Aristotelian understanding of personality is no longer descriptive of any state of being that obtains in the universe we inhabit. There is no Hans Kung to point the way to workable definitions of the One one believes in. To teach church history to the coming generations in the form of a long parade of dogged maintaining of 'what has been handed down', to fear self-investigation and self-questioning, is to be ridiculed. When the most of what you have is tradition, very quickly tradition is all you have.

Tradition might also revive to heighten the community consciousness, through the medium of art. It is a shame that there is no Coptic popular devotional art. When *bon-dieuseries* are sold at a Coptic church, they are utterly alien, Franco-Italian representations of the Sacred Heart, the Little Flower, Our Lady of Fatima, and other nineteenth-century Latin devotions. Surely there exist creative artists who could offer images of Cyril, Pachomius, Shenute and other embodiments of Coptic *paradosis*, composers to write a *Missa Coptica*, makers of vestments that will be in good taste. Prizes could be offered for the best work in these fields.

The third existence-pattern facing Coptic Orthodoxy is of course the question of simple physical survival. So long isolated from the fructifying currents of interchange that affected the major communions, Coptic families, even the most cultivated, remain proudly exclusive in their 'ghetto of the mind' (regardless of the degree to which they have interbred with Latin and other Christians). The Copts' pride is to say 'they cannot kill us'. Negative, not positive. Survival cannot be achieved by compromise with the status quo. It is unfortunately true that the rich Copts, much more interested in protecting their property than in theological truth, have ever advocated a party line of low profiles, 'don't make waves', make terms with this world. But survival alone is, paradoxically, a one-way path to extinction. For the Coptic communion to be a viable construction of reality for individual and group, it must look beyond mere survival.

Three paths to solutions may be put forward. First, in the context of twentieth-century liberation movements, an unrelenting effort to reverse the process whereby members of the Coptic Orthodox confession live as second-class citizens. When the day and night are filled by the struggle for education, employment, housing, a say in government and a bearable quality of life, such things as basic theological literacy go by the board. Copts have gone in for the traditional minority occupations: doctors,

lawyers, accountants, merchants, engineers. When there are Coptic scholars of the humanities on a level with their colleagues anywhere in the world, then something will have been accomplished. Young people still have no Coptic 'role models' to emulate. When it becomes possible to walk in safety, receive mail with reliability, and become grounded in the classics, then generations can begin to grow up taller in body and spirit, unstunted by fear, and able to act rather than simply react.

Second, a recognition that the children born in the new free lands — America, Canada, Australia, Western Europe — are the hope of the world of Coptic Orthodoxy. They will grow up as part of the normal life of the planet Earth, making a few rueful jokes about the funny ways Mom and Dad brought from the old country, but unafraid, finding their own vocations among other children of every other ethnic background. ~~When one sees free citizens having the joy of putting on a simple parish~~ ME, I'M COPTIC, HAVE YOU HUGGED A COPT TODAY? - we will be seeing human beings with some hope for their future.

The third solution is the Coptic language. It is time to begin the informed, educated, correct use of spoken classical Sahidic in every Coptic home in Egypt; and to begin the teaching of grammatically correct, comprehensibly pronounced classical Sahidic in religious education classes for Coptic children in every country. A people is not a people without a language of its own: a language to use in situations of the heart, not just the marketplace or the office. The greatest crime in Coptic history is the fact that the language, alone of all the languages of the Christian East, was allowed completely to die. It can, however, be made to live: with exploitation of existing forms, judicious borrowing, and the formation of a Language Academy (like that in Catalonia since before World War I), the pernicious effects of the pamphlets of early, uneducated would-be popularizers and church rote memorizers can be counteracted. A language capable of dealing with all the realities of contemporary life can be reborn and serve as the badge and the pride of millions of people. It has already happened once in the Near East. The Coptic mind is known in its language. Spoken Coptic can deliver the future from the sterility of mere ethnicism, the dead end of tradition, and the terror of annihilation.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### ***Introduction to Sahidic Coptic.***

*By Thomas O. Lambdin. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983. 377 + xvii pp.*

### ***A Concise Coptic-English Lexicon.***

*Compiled by Richard Smith. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983. 81 + xiii pp. Cloth, \$10.95*

The Coptic language, when it was still the common spoken language of Egypt, developed a number of local dialects. Each differed slightly from the others in pronunciation and grammar. Only two of these dialects, Sahidic and Boharic, achieved any great literary importance. In both cases it was their use by the Coptic Church that brought them prominence. The portions of the Church's services which remain in Coptic are in the Boharic dialect, and it is this dialect which most modern Copts think of as "Coptic". Before about the tenth century, however, the dominant dialect was Sahidic. That dialect was the language of prayer and of religious literature for most of the native Christians of Egypt during the early years of the Christian era. Our purpose here is to review the importance of Sahidic literature for the study of Egyptian Christianity and to introduce the reader to two new books which open up that literature to speakers of English.

Sahidic was the dialect of the early monastic Fathers, of Sts. Anthony and Pachomius and their earliest disciples. It was the dialect in which the stories and sayings of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* circulated before they were collected and set down in Greek and Latin. Sahidic was also the language of Shenute. At his death about 461, Shenute had been head of the White Monastery for over eighty years. He was a contemporary and supporter of St. Cyril of Alexandria in his struggle against the Nestorian heresy and accompanied that Father to the Council of Ephesus in 431. He is considered by the Coptic Church to be one of its greatest saints and one of the founders of Coptic monasticism. Shenute was a writer and preacher as well as a monk and a pastor. Unfortunately, much of what he produced during his long career has been lost. But much also has been preserved. Shenute was not a philosophical theologian, and few of his works deal with abstract theology. Rather his concern was for the spiritual health and growth of the souls entrusted to his care. Thus practical spiritual counsel and direction make up most of the content of his homilies and letters. This material establishes Shenute's reputation as a talented writer and stylist. Indeed,

he has been called the best writer to use the Coptic language. However, his work has not received much attention from Western scholars. The most complete translations are in Latin and French. The French version was made at the turn of the century and is not readily available. At any rate, serious, scholarly study of Shenute and his times demands that his works be read in their original language, the Sahidic dialect of Coptic.

The works of Shenute and the relics of the early monastic Fathers are not the only materials extant in Sahidic. In the last few decades there have been several important discoveries of manuscripts in Egypt, most of them containing books from various early heretical sects. The most important find was a jar full of manuscripts dug up near the city of Nag Hammadi. These thirteen volumes contained over fifty theological treatises, dialogues, and stories which had apparently circulated among Gnostic heretics. A few of these documents are in Sub-Akhmimic, one of the less common Coptic dialects, but the great majority of the books are in Sahidic. Only a few of these works had been known before, either from other copies in Coptic or from fragments of their Greek originals. The rise of Gnosticism was the most serious internal threat faced by the Church in its critically formative second century. Prior to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices our first-hand information about the teachings of this influential and dangerous movement came from a few original Gnostic works (most, by coincidence, preserved in Coptic) and from the accounts of Gnostic doctrine by the Fathers who combatted it, primarily Sts. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius. The discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts greatly increases the sources available for better understanding Gnosticism, its origins, and its place in early Christianity.

The Nag Hammadi documents, and much from the other finds, have been translated into English and other Western languages. But anyone who intends to make a serious study of these materials, the movements which produced them, and the conflicts those movements caused in the early Church, must work with them in Coptic.

Besides the material on early Coptic monasticism and the heretical writings, there is a third category of Sahidic literature. This is the great mass of popular literature (sermons, letters, accounts of visions, lives of saints, martyrologies, etc.) which has been preserved, most of it from a later period than the monastic and heretical literature. These writings, like the works of Shenute, are not intended so much for study by theologians as for the edification of the ordinary Christian. Quantities of this material have been translated into Western languages, including English. But a great deal has not even been published in Coptic, much less translated. The manuscripts are scattered in libraries and museums throughout the world. Good scholars well-trained in both Coptic and Church history who can undertake their collection, publication, and translation are unfortunately too few. Yet an understanding of this material is important. These books open to us the religious concerns and piety of the ordinary Christian, layman, clergyman, or monk, of Egypt and of the eastern Mediterranean

area as a whole in the Byzantine and Arab periods. They are thus important for our understanding of the background to the doctrinal controversies which engaged theologians and hierarchs in this period, as well as for our appreciation of Christian life and spirituality in general in that time and since.

The end of this extended introduction brings us to the first of the books under consideration in this review, *Introduction to Sahidic Coptic*, by Thomas O. Lambdin. Dr. Lambdin is no stranger to the classroom nor to the writing of textbooks, being a professor of Semitic languages at Harvard and the author of a primer of Biblical Hebrew. The present book gives us, for the first time in English, a really excellent textbook of the Sahidic dialect, a key with which to unlock the written remains of early Coptic Christianity.

The book begins with an "Introduction" which summarizes the origin, history, and *cetera*. The heart of the book is in the thirty lessons which follow. Each lesson discusses points of grammar, introduces new vocabulary, and provides a set of exercises. Following the lessons Dr. Lambdin has provided the student with an extensive chrestomathy on which to polish his proficiency in the language. The collection includes the first five chapters of the Gospel of Luke (complete except for the genealogy of 3, 23ff.); excerpts from the *Apophthegmata Patrum*; several chapters from the deuterocanonical *Wisdom of Solomon*; and the extant Sahidic fragments of *The Life of Joseph the Carpenter*, a sometimes amusing, sometimes touching apocryphal biography of Christ's foster-father. Material on the nature of these writings and the manuscripts which preserve them introduces the readings, and notes explaining peculiarities of vocabulary and syntax accompany them at the foot of each page. The book concludes with a "Glossary" (more on this below), a separate glossary of Greek loan-words, a brief bibliography, a "Grammatical Index (Coptic)," a table of verb forms, and a "Subject Index."

This book is not a reference grammar but a textbook. Lambdin has not intended it for the specialist seeking information but for the student seeking the basic skills necessary for reading a Sahidic text. Given this aim the book is a complete success. The explanations of grammatical points sometimes seem simplistic, and much is missing which the expert might like to see, e.g. the Middle Egyptian and Demotic antecedents of Coptic constructions and vocabulary. But these things are unnecessary for comprehending a piece of Coptic literature. Lambdin has excluded what is irrelevant for that purpose.

What is included is not only relevant but well presented. To borrow a term from computer jargon, the book is "user-friendly." Discussions of grammatical points are generally clear and precise. The exercises achieve the proper balance between reinforcing the material of the present lesson and reviewing earlier material. These features, clarity, simplicity, and comprehensiveness, make this book as suitable for individual self-study as for classroom use.

The "Glossary" deserves special comment. It contains far more than is necessary to work through the book's exercises and readings. The author states in his preface that it "is intended to contain the full vocabulary of the Sahidic New Testament, ... as well as a generous selection of lexical items from other Biblical and literary texts." Heretofore, there has been no convenient Coptic-English dictionary; one had no choice but to invest in W. E. Crum's massive and expensive *A Coptic Dictionary*. Now with this glossary and the simultaneous publication of the other volume treated in this review that deficiency is remedied.

Of course, Dr. Lambdin's book is not perfect. Words in the "Glossary" have not been alphabetized according to the system followed in standard reference grammars such as Till's or the standard lexicon by Crum, mentioned above. This will certainly confuse the student when he turns to more complex literature and needs to consult these grammars or lexica.

The selection of readings also presents some problems and illustrates a general deficiency in the book. Many of those who set out to learn Sahidic will want access to Shenute, the great stylist of the language, or to the Gnostic codices from Nag Hammadi, the material which currently excites the most interest. Both of these present grammatical and lexical problems to perplex both neophyte and scholar. Yet Lambdin has included no readings from either corpus. These omissions can be justified. Lambdin asserts the peculiarities of Shenute's syntax and vocabulary as the reason for not including him. In reality Lambdin has included much which is helpful for working with Shenute's writings. In preparing for this review, I read through a very brief homily by Shenute and found Lambdin's "Glossary" extremely useful. Lambdin makes no mention of the Nag Hammadi materials. Several of these codices are not in pure Sahidic but in Sub-Akhmimic or a mixed dialect. Even those in Sahidic present grammatical anomalies. These difficulties, however, would seem to make it all the more necessary to include a selection from one of the more standard tractates such as *The Gospel of Thomas* and thereby introduce in a small way the complexities and perplexities of the corpus. As it stands, the reader can approach much of the Nag Hammadi library only with some difficulty, even after mastering Lambdin's *Introduction*.

We must also note two exceptions to Lambdin's general clarity of presentation. Lesson 26.3 deals with the Egyptian antecedents of certain Coptic verbs. The discussion is not well illustrated and will likely leave the beginner confused. A more serious difficulty is the discussion of bipartite and tripartite verb forms in Lesson 24.2. H. J. Polotsky attempted, through this classification, to bring some order to the morphology of the rather odd Coptic tense system. Lambdin's discussion is a bit too compressed and concise, and he has chosen this place to introduce the distinction between "converters" and tense prefixes. I doubt that someone not already familiar with Polotsky could follow the presentation. If there are revised editions of the book in the future, the discussion in this section should be expanded and the explanation of converted forms discussed separately. In the meantime one can read Polotsky's own



presentation in "The Coptic Conjugation System," *Orientalia* 29 (1960), pp. 392-422.

In concluding this portion of the review I should add that some of the above criticisms may seem unimportant and picayune. A reviewer, however, owes it to his readers to discuss as many of a book's good and bad points as space allows. When one is dealing with a book as uniformly excellent as Dr. Lambdin's, all one has left to criticize are small and obscure points.

This brings us to the second work treated in this review, Richard Smith's *A Concise Coptic-English Lexicon*. This volume, published independently and apparently without knowledge of Lambdin's *Introduction*, ably fills the need for a student dictionary small in size and (relatively) inexpensive, but broad in scope. According to its "Introduction" the focus of the book is on the vocabulary of the Sahidic New Testament and of the Nag Hammadi corpus. It thus fills a lack in Lambdin's "Glossary", which omits the latter material. In preparation for this review I compared the *Lexicon* with large portions of the word-indexes of several of the published texts of Nag Hammadi tractates. I found nothing of importance missing. However, when I turned to a very brief homily by Shenute, I found the "Glossary" in Lambdin's *Introduction* much more helpful.

To make the Nag Hammadi material accessible, Smith has included many variant forms not found in "standard Sahidic," enclosing each such entry in brackets. The compiler stresses the utilitarian purpose of his work and disclaims any pretension to scientific precision in his treatment of dialectic variants. The advanced scholar will miss such refinements, but the scholar can also remedy the situation by consulting Crum's *Dictionary*, where such things are set out in detail. The novice in Coptic will not miss the detail and will find Smith's volume all the more helpful for having left it out. Smith's listing of variants is not exhaustive, but the omissions should not cause much trouble, and the variants included will help to open up the Nag Hammadi material to anyone who has first mastered Lambdin's book.

The reader should be warned of one omission: Greek loan-words, so common in Christian Coptic, are not included. In this Smith follows the usual practice of Coptic lexica. Even Crum only includes native words. The reader, therefore, must be able to distinguish Greek words in his text and look them up in Greek dictionaries if he is not familiar with them. We should note here that Lambdin's *Introduction* does have a brief glossary of common Greek borrowings.

In summary, these two books, Lambdin's *Introduction* and Smith's *Lexicon*, give the beginner the tools he needs to gain a knowledge of Coptic and to approach with confidence early Coptic literature. For those who already know the Boharic dialect they provide a means of moving back to still earlier Coptic Christian literature. Their simultaneous publication offers both scholars and theologians the opportunity to remedy the unfortunate neglect of Coptic studies and to satisfy their own curiosity about the tradition of the Coptic Church and early Egyptian Christianity.

Rev. Fr. Dimitri Cozby

***Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus***

*Translated by Ronald E. Heine. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982. Pp. 435. Hardcover, \$24.95.*

*This is volume 71 of The Fathers of the Church series. Origen<sup>1</sup> (185-254 A.D.), as Ronald Heine says in his introduction, "stands out in the third century Church like an oak on the prairie. The Church was to live for centuries in the shade of his achievements . . . Few indeed were the churchmen . . . who did not owe some aspect of their theology or methodology to Origen."*

The Translator gives in the introduction an outline of Origen's life and works which amounted, according to St. Jerome, to two thousand books. More of Origen's works have been preserved in Latin translations, mostly by Rufinus of Aquileia, than in their Greek original.

Origen delivered his homilies on Genesis and Exodus, and on other books of the Old and New Testaments at Caesarea sometime between 238 and 244. These homilies were translated into Latin by Rufinus between 403 and 405 A.D. Rufinus was an admirer of Origen and he spent eight years (c. 372-380) in Alexandria where he studied under St. Didymus the Blind. A comparison between the few preserved Greek fragments of the homilies and the Latin translation shows that Rufinus was faithful to the thought of Origen, but not to his words.

Except for the eighth homily on Genesis, which was translated in 1565, it seems that Origen's homilies on Genesis and Exodus have never been previously translated into English . . . Actually we have only a few English translations of the patristic commentaries and homilies on the Old Testament books.

The work of Origen was unmatched in the ancient Church; it "outstripped both the Greeks and Latins", as St. Jerome says. The homilies translated in this volume reveal Origen as a biblical scholar as well as a concerned pastor. He echoed the Tradition of interpreting passages of Scripture in their literal (or historical), moral and spiritual senses. But he always stressed the spiritual meaning, without rejecting the literal sense. For him the literal explanation of a text was a preliminary stage in exegesis. He was always in a hurry to discover its meaning for the spiritual life. His use of typology was in an orderly systematic manner in order to form a single doctrinal unit out of the main spiritual meanings of Scripture<sup>2</sup> not just moral allegorizing after the manner of Philo of Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> At the center of Origen's love for Scripture and his success in its interpretation was a personal devout life in Christ. St. Gregory the Wonder-worker, his disciple, said about him, "He had the power to listen to God and understand what He said and then to explain it to men." According to Origen, in order to reach the spiritual meaning one ought to pray that "the veil might be removed (Cf. 2 Cor. 3:16) from the heart, that the Lord might remove the veil of the letter and uncover the light of the Spirit."<sup>4</sup> There is need for tears and incessant prayer that the

Lord may open our eyes, as He opened the eyes of the blind men of Jericho, and the veil of the letter of the Law may be removed.<sup>5</sup> In his comment on the Transfiguration of Christ, Origen saw in the white garments the expression of the words of Scripture which become shining before those who go up the high mountain with Christ.<sup>6</sup>

In the Homilies we see how Origen looks deeply into every scriptural event to find food for the soul. In the story of the Flood, he sees Christ as the spiritual Noah Who saves the human race from destruction in His ark, that is, in His Church. In the flight from Sodom, Lot represents the human soul proceeding to salvation, while his wife represents the flesh which looks backwards seeking after pleasures. The two daughters refer to vainglory and pride, the two vices that deprive of the virtue those who ascend to the height of knowledge.

Isaac carrying the 'wood of the holocaust' was a figure of Christ Who carried His own cross. Yet 'carrying the wood of the holocaust' is the duty of a priest; Christ is both Victim and Priest. Rebecca is compared to the faithful souls who come daily to the wells of the Scriptures to draw from them the water of the Holy Spirit. Actually the brides of the Patriarchs Isaac, Jacob and Moses met their bridegrooms at wells. Origen finds in this the union of the soul with Christ which can come about in no other way except through instruction in Scripture. The Church is united to Christ in the water of Baptism. Continuing on the Scripture theme, Origen finds in the wells dug by Abraham and Isaac a reference to the books of the Old and New Testaments.

The order of God to Israel to go down to Egypt is a figure of our Lord Who descended into the world where He was made into the great nation of the Church.

The rod of Moses is a type of the cross of Christ by which Egypt (a figure of the world) is subjugated and Pharaoh (the ruler of this world) is conquered.

The bitter waters of Marah stand for the Law if understood according to the letter. The People of God drink it when it becomes sweet by the tree of life and the mystery of the cross. After the Law has been understood spiritually in Marah, they come to Elim, a sign of the passing over from the Old Testament to the New. The twelve springs and the seventy palm trees stand for the twelve disciples and the seventy apostles.

Manna was first given on earth on the Lord's Day and on the seventh it was stopped. Origen sees in this the Jewish Sabbath on which no grace of God descends from the sky, no heavenly bread is given to the People.

These are examples of the rich material presented in this volume which is not only a valuable addition to the patristic reference library, but also instructing to Bible students, nourishing to pastors and edifying to spiritually minded readers.

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2. J. Danielou: Origen. Translated by W. Michell. New York: Sheed and Ward;  
1955: 165,166
3. A Jewish thinker and exegete and a leader of the Alexandrian Jews; c. 20 B.C.-50  
A.D.
4. Hom. Gen. 6:1
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6. Origen's Commentary on Matthew (ANF, Vol. X:470)

## ***BOOK NOTICES***

### ***Coptologia***

#### ***A Research Publication in Coptology and Egyptology, Volume IV***

*Edited by F. M. Ishak, Ph. D. Thunder Bay, Ontario: Coptologia Publication Inc. (Correspondence should be addressed to: Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada P7B 5E1. Attn. Prof. Ishak) 1983. Pp. 87. \$4.50 (Can) \$4.00 (U.S.)*

Coptologia is an inquiry into the rich world of the Coptic and ancient Egyptian heritage. This volume reviews three books of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III; the first is a historical book on St. Mark the Apostle, the second, *Release of the Spirit*, deals with contemplation, and the third, *Salvation According to Orthodox Apprehension*, is a theology book. Other papers in this volume discuss the works and mystical philosophy of St. Clement of Alexandria, the social and economic situations of the Copts in Egypt and in North America, Coptic Archaeology, Coptic Art and the Coptic Museum in Egypt.

### ***Theology of the New Testament, Volume 2***

*By Leonhard Goppelt. Translated by John Alsup. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans; 1982. Pp. 348. Cloth, \$17.95*

This second and last volume by the late German New Testament scholar focuses upon the person and work of our Lord as described by the various apostolic witnesses (the primitive church of Palestine, St. Paul and the post-Pauline writers of the New Testament) and as understood in light of the Old Testament. Apart from its value for the scholar as an approach to a biblical theology that comprehends both testaments, the book invites the reader to a deeper understanding of the New Testament books.

### ***The Byzantine Saint***

*Edited by Sergei Hackel. London, UK: The Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius; 1981. Pp. 245. Paper, £ 6.00.*

This is a selection of papers from the University of Birmingham XIVth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (March 22-25, 1980). Because it is impossible to review some twenty scholarly articles I limit myself to the job of introducing the book to the readers and giving a general idea about its contents. Two papers deal with the *panegyris* as a social and political phenomenon through the different Byzantine periods (sixth to fourteenth centuries). Several papers discuss the lives of the Byzantine holy men in general, and the subject of hagiographical methodology, while others give particular examples. The last section of the book discusses the Saint in cult and art and includes papers on relics, icons, medallions and *panegyris*, or public festivals of martyrs.

Most contributors were very critical about the narratives of the saints. However, Sergei Hackel says in the introduction, "Scholarship is committed to the establishment of truth. The Church, for its part, should be willing to accept nothing less ... There is always a need to distinguish and to preserve Tradition from traditions."

The last paper on '*The Panegyris of the Byzantine Saint*' recites historical texts that describe this common practice in celebrating the martyrs' feasts in the East and ends with the sad conclusion of its pagan origin, "The *panegyris*, against which the Church Fathers declaimed because of its concern with commerce, frivolity and sin, early became attached to the annual celebration of the saint's cult."

Except for a paper on St. Pachomius by Henry Chadwick, the book does not deal with Coptic saints. Yet it needs a close reading by anyone who studies the lives of saints in the Coptic Church.

## ***BOOKS RECEIVED***

***The Monastic Rule of Iosif Volotsky.*** Edited and translated by David M. Goldfrank. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications Inc.; 1983. Pp. 247. Paper, \$14.95

*The first English translation of a medieval Orthodox monastic Rule, with introductory chapters dealing with Volotsky's life (1439/40-1515) and the outline, sources and*

### ***Carmen Christi***

***Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship.*** By Ralph P. Martin. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans; 1983. Pp. 378. Paper, \$8.95

*A historical and an exegetical study of an early Christian hymn that sets forth the story of salvation and proclaims the preexistence of Christ, the kenosis of His incarnation, and His exaltation.*

***Social Justice and the Christian State.*** By Ronald H. Nash. Milford, Michigan: Mott Media, 1983. Pp. 200. Cloth, \$12.95.

*The author claims that socialism is incompatible with Christianity.*

***Learn to Read the Greek New Testament.*** By Ward Powers. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans; 1982. Pp. 336. Cloth, \$19.95.

*An aid for the study of New Testament Greek in the shortest possible time, intended for individual or group use.*

### ***Antichrist and the Second Advent***

Los Angeles, California: Sts. Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria Orthodox Publications. (P.O. Box 42689, L.A., Ca. 90042); 1983. Pp. 45. Paper. No Price.

*A short commentary on the biblical texts dealing with the subject, compiled from various patristic sources.*

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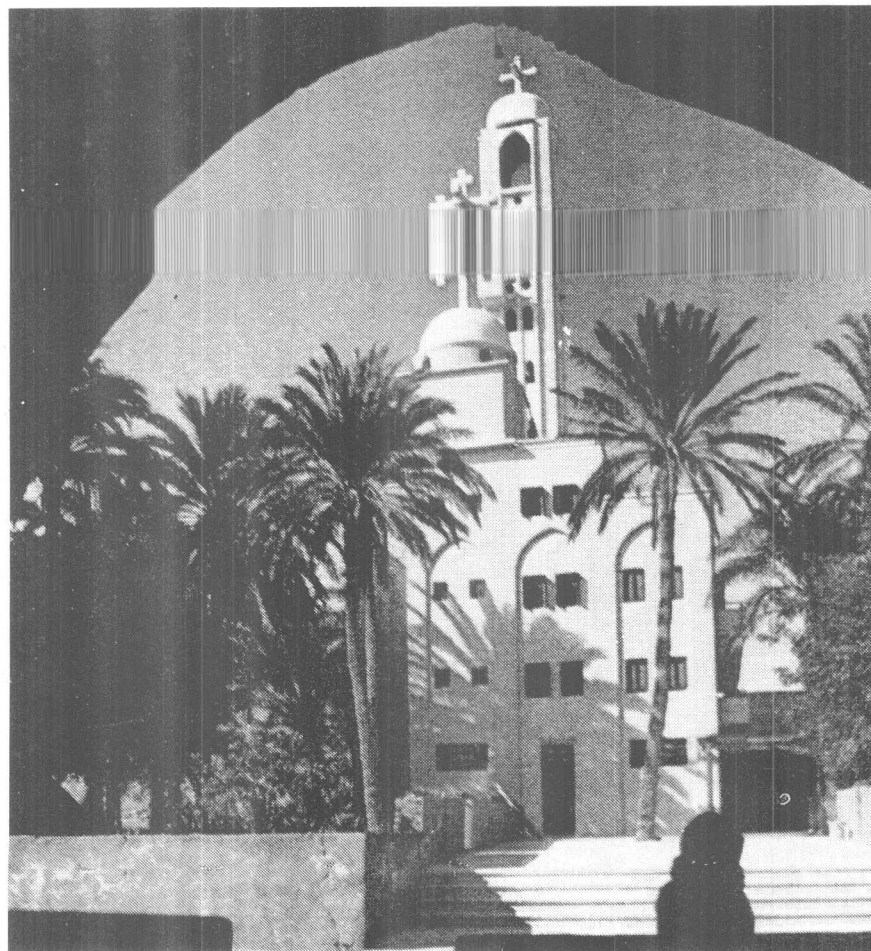
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